

*CLAIM AMENDMENTS*

1. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser device comprising:  
an active layer;  
a lower ~~clad~~ cladding layer located ~~below~~ on a first side of said active layer;  
a first upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer located ~~above~~ on a second side of said active layer the second side being on a side of the active layer;  
an etching stopper layer located ~~above~~ opposite said first upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer on the first side of said active layer; and  
a second upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer located ~~above~~ opposite said etching stopper layer, on the first side of said active layer, and ~~provided with~~ including a stripe-~~form~~ protrusion, in which a stripe-~~form~~ light-guiding channel is ~~formed below~~ located, between said protrusion and said etching stopper layer, wherein said etching stopper layer is ~~formed as~~ a single layer and is composed of a material different from a ~~material~~ materials of each of said ~~clad~~ lower, first upper, and second upper cladding layers, and has a refractive index nearly equal to a refractive index of each of said ~~clad~~ lower, first upper, and second upper cladding layers.

2. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 1, wherein said active layer contains GaInP, each of said ~~clad~~ lower, first upper, and second upper cladding layers ~~containing~~ contains AlGaInP, and said etching stopper layer ~~containing~~ contains  $\text{Al}_x\text{Ga}_{1-x}\text{As}$  of arbitrary Al composition ratio  $x$ , where  $0 < x < 1$ .

3. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 2, wherein said Al composition ratio  $x$  is ~~larger than or equal to~~ at least 0.45.

4. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser device comprising:  
an active layer;  
a lower ~~clad~~ cladding layer located ~~below~~ on a first side of said active layer;  
a first upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer located ~~above~~ on a second side of said active layer, the second side being on a side of the active layer; and  
a second upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer located ~~above~~ opposite said first upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer, on the second side of said active layer, and ~~provided with~~ including a stripe-~~form~~ protrusion, in which a stripe-~~form~~ light-guiding channel is ~~formed below~~ located, between said protrusion and said second upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer, wherein said second upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer is ~~composed of~~ a material different from a material of said first upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer.

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cladding layer, and has a refractive index nearly equal to a refractive index of said first upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer.

5. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 4, wherein said active layer contains GaInP, each of said lower ~~clad~~ cladding layer and said first upper ~~clad~~ cladding layer ~~containing~~ contains AlGaInP, and said second upper clad layer ~~containing~~ contains  $\text{Al}_x\text{Ga}_{1-x}\text{As}$  of arbitrary Al composition ratio ~~x~~ where  $0 \leq x < 1$ .

6. (Currently Amended) The semiconductor laser device according to claim 5, wherein ~~said Al composition ratio x is larger than or equal to~~ at least 0.45.